



The South India CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India

● SEPTEMBER 1986

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THE LOTUS AND THE CROSS

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SEPTEMBER 1986

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25 Years Ago!

There can be no doubt at all that the inauguration of the Union surpassed hopes and disappointed fears in manner passing the imagination. In the minds of the many hundreds of witnesses is but one thought—this thing is of God and it is marvellous in our eyes. As, at the stroke of 8 a.m. on September 27th 1947 the cathedral bell rang, and the organ played, and the procession moved up the aisle, an ineffable sense of peace and gladness, awe and worship, fell upon the great congregation. All the problems and answers, the disappointments and achievements of the past years suddenly seemed to fall into place. We had been right in believing that God had a purpose for us and that he would bring us to where we had prayed to be.

A. MARCUS WARD
Churchman

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The Lotus And The Cross



If August 15th of 1947 was a red-letter day in the history of our country for on that day was born a free and independent India, September 27th of the same year was another red-letter day in the history of the Christian Churches for on that day was born new Church of South India. Never in the history of the world in one country have two great events of such far reaching importance occurred within the span of less than two months. It is providence that the Church of South India was born free indigenous and autonomous in the same year as the country attained its political freedom. This year, the 39th anniversary is specially important because it leads us on to the fortieth year, a very significant number in the Bible to which several events were attributed to.

We have now come to a stage where we begin to perceive the true nature of the responsible unity we have sought for. Any union is an ongoing process of growing together into perfect unity, transcending some of the barriers, and overcoming the difficulties which come in the way. Living together and working together with a sense of mission is an art which the church has mastered through its able leaders and no doubt we have crossed the 39th milestone successfully. But let us not forget that the unity is the gift of the Spirit. It is not what we have created or achieved but the sphere of life into which we were drawn by the Spirit.

Church is a complex of personal relationships. Life in the church is life together. It speaks of the qualities that people should possess, their attitude to one another. The symbols, the lotus

and the cross, used in the logo of the church possess a rich cultural heritage which will help us understanding of our call and mission.

Lotus, a typical Indian flower, is a temple flower. Mythologically it is supposed to be the seat of creator. Pankajam one of the Indian names of lotus has a very significant meaning it means 'that which is born in mud'. This flower blossoms at the sunrise and withers away after sunset, in other words it lives as long as it receives the sunrays—hence it is also called 'thammipuvu'—flower of the sun. All these meanings attributed to the flower suit us well to interpret the position, nature and role of the people in the bond of union.

The petals of the lotus and the cross are beautifully knitted together with the fiery-tongues of the Holy Spirit. It is an authentic Indian expression of people's communion with God. The original colours—red (for life) and purple (for piety and ecclesiastical) in white backdrop implicitly communicate the nature of the mystical union, where, an inseparable companionship is established which, again, a typical Indian thought form.

The words—THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE, CHURCH OF SOUTH INDIA are embossed in a circle round the lotus and the cross. The words, as we know, are taken from the high priestly prayer of Jesus Christ who prayed not only for the 'Church' but also for the whole world. This universality is portrayed by placing the words in a form of circle—a symbol which also represents the universe.

'That they all may be one ; as thou, father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us. . . ' (Jn 17 : 21) is an inclusive affirmation which explicitly shows the centrality of Christ and the Church, his body. Since it is also, the prayer of the Church that it is not only churches but all people of this country are to be united—a prayer for national integration is well taken care of in the emblem.

The imposing central position of the cross in the logo conveys the idea that it was the indefatigable, selfless supreme sacrifice that was made by Jesus on the cross is the base of the Church. Cross runs through the lotus—as it is painted ; it depicts the cleansing act of the cross—working in the hearts of its members,

helping to get rid of the mud in which were born and restoring them to the pristine purity.

The four ends of the cross painted in deep colour indicating that it is the cross that guides all members inside and outside to join in one stream to pray and labour unitedly for a peaceful coexistence and communal harmony. It is said that the world waits for the true interpretation of St. John's gospel from an Indian mystic. I believe our logo bridges the gap to certain extent ! Saints, prophets, philosophers, theologians and poets there have been and generations still unborn may yet produce many more to whom perhaps in a greater measure than before the truth of God will be revealed and through them to the whole world.

—DASS BABU

Asia Youth Week October 13-19, 1986

TO BUILD AND PLANT THE NEW ASIAN CHURCH

From the 13-19 October, 1986 youth of the Asian churches will celebrate **Asia Youth Week**. The celebratory process of the week will include a preparatory phase of reflection, Bible studies, immersion/exposure leading up to the Youth Celebratory Event.

Asia Youth Week emerged from the CCA Youth Committee meeting in Hua Hin, Thailand, February 1986.

As youth, we must address ourselves to the crucial issues that threaten the very existence of our people. The Korean struggle for democracy and human dignity is not isolated from the struggles of the Tamils in Sri Lanka for self-determination. Neither are the struggles of minority and indigenous people in many Asian countries isolated from each other and movements campaigning for a nuclear free Asia-Pacific.

In an effort to build solidarity and to create an awareness of the Asian situation amongst youth movements in Asia, a youth collective is preparing resources for study, analysis and reflection. Reflection must be followed by collective action that will awaken the latent and strengthen the ecumenical youth movement.

To help with the practical arrangement for the Asia Youth Week, CCA YOUTH is despatching to all member churches a poster, a calendar, postcards and a resource document containing Bible studies, order of worship, Asian situations and suggestions to make the process Asian and relevant.

Therefore, let us express our solidarity by participating in the celebration to build and plant a new future.

NCC-I PEACE CENTRE

The NCC-India has decided to establish in Nagpur an *Inter-religious Centre for Justice and Peace Initiatives*. The six main areas of the Centre's concern are to be—Peace, Justice, Ecology-Environment, Nuclear Issues, Militarism, Disarmament. The NCC-I wishes to see the Centre as 'a place for doing theology, a study-cum programme centre which will cooperate with all religions and organisations which are vitally interested in peace-issues'. It also hopes the money needed for the project will come mostly from within India.

One major emphasis of the Centre is to be action and intervention on peace issues at the local, congregational, village and city levels. In this connection, the International Affairs unit and the Asian Missionary Support Programme of the CCA were glad to plan and finance an exposure trip by **Mr. Mathai Zachariah**, the NCC-I General Secretary, to Japan, Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia. During his visits, he met with Church leaders and people in peace work of various kinds. He said this enabled him to gain an Asian perspective on peace. Mr. Zachariah was accompanied by his wife Annie.

—CCAN

State of our Church—Going on Forty

THE REVD. M. AZARIAH, *General Secretary*

PART—I

To assess the state of our Church we normally hark back to the Constitution of the Church which spells out the various aspects of the Mandate and Vision for the life and mission of our Church. The Constitution of our United Church of South India sought to overcome 'the scandal of division' between the Anglicans and Methodists, the Presbyterians and the Reformed congregationalists. And yet all these denominational transplantations from the Western world not only had a common Lord and a common faith but also had a common mandate and a common goal for life and mission as the Church of God in Christ. Of course, this commonality is rooted in the Gospel and in the teachings of the New Testament as a whole. Thus, after 39 years of our *adventure in unity* which is better described as a *pilgrimage of unity*, each of the uniting denominations continued and carried the same aspects of mandate and goal rooted in the Scriptures and came to be embodied in our Constitution. Therefore it will be necessary for any assessment of the present state of our Church, the criteria needs to be drawn from the Scriptures which are the base of our Church's Constitution.

The passage in the Gospel describing the purpose and call of the twelve Apostles by our Lord, it seems to me, provides the key categories for our own assessment. In Mark. 3: 14, five aspects of the purpose and calling of the disciples are mentioned. (1) The Lord has called the disciples 'to be with Him.' (2) And 'to be sent by Him'. (3) So that they may *preach* (the good news of the kingdom of God). (4) That they may *heal the sick* and (5) Also *cast out the demons* (from the society and the world into which they are being sent). And it could be quickly discerned that all these 5 elements are incorporated, naturally couched in a different and contemporary language, in the Constitution of the CSI.

1. 'To be with Him'

Here we have the Scriptural foundation for *the worship of God in Spirit and in truth* as well as the Sacramental fellowship of all the members which are the first of the major 5 aspects of the purpose and calling of our Church. In the book of Acts we read that outside observers of the first Christians attributed their capacity to turn the world upside down and loving one another so deeply to the fact 'they had been with Jesus'. The secret of power and the performance of the early Christians therefore emanated from their worship life and sacramental fellowship among all its members (Acts. 1: 8; 2: 42-46).

The chapter on the governing principles of the Church in our Constitution clearly includes the above concerns in the sections on the sacraments and worship in the Church. The well known Book of Common Worship introduced

in the 1950s in our Church and hailed even by the Roman Catholic Church as a liturgical marvel has been used fairly widely during the past 4 decades. While about 10 per cent of congregations mostly from the urban and ex-Anglican background congregations continue to use their traditional forms of public worship. But, more interestingly, dis-satisfaction and criticism against our CSI liturgy has been voiced from significant sections of our Church including those who have not been using that liturgy on the ground of not being adequately Indian. It is in this context we must welcome the recent acceptance of 'An alternate Version' of Liturgy for celebrating the Eucharist' for experimental use in our congregations which has several indigenous elements besides providing increased participation for the worshippers and greater emphasis on joyous celebration.

During the past 7 years following the formation of the Joint Council of the CSI-CNI-MTC, the introduction of liturgical exercises like celebrating the Festival of Unity once a year could be mentioned as a new initiative in quest of a common Indian spirituality. But to my mind, a deeper concern and anxiety relates to the worship and sacramental fellowship needs of our rural Christians, most of them illiterates, who form a major bulk of our Church. Obviously the efforts by the relevant Committees at the diocesan levels for the Christian nurture and building of spirituality among our rural Christian brothers and sisters have to be greatly strengthened with new initiatives consciously undertaken.

'To be with Jesus Christ' also means 'to glorify God and enjoy Him forever'. It is said about Isaac one of the Jewish Patriarchs that he went out into the fields in the evening (Gen. 24: 63) for meditation as was his custom. It is well known that the rustic shepherd boy David who was raised to be king of Israel, did so through the ladder of daily meditative practice of the presence of God as he created the scores of Psalms and Poems. And it is reported by Luke, to mention just one of the Gospel writers, that Jesus of Nazareth who combined in Himself both Patriarch and King and all the genuine spirituality of Judaism, was seen at solitary prayer and meditation at least on 18 occasion, to be with His Father-God.

To nurture and nourish the two million members, particularly the majority of rural illiterate and semi literate Christians of our great Church into 'Christ consciousness' or 'the practice of the presence of God' and into a 'life in the Spirit' (to use the language of St. Paul), what has been done in the past four decades?

In the Christian Church, as in all other religions, there has always been tendency and temptation for the votaries

(Contd. on p. 6)

The Church of South India—Towards the Fortieth Milestone

BISHOP SUNDAR CLARKE, *Madras*

As we celebrate the 39th anniversary of the Church of South India we need to look back into the history of the historic Church of South India and also look forward and prepare for the 40th anniversary celebrations of this most eventful church in history. It is certainly eventful because the spirit of God brooding over the Church of South India created and brought into existence the United Church. The union of Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians and Congregationalists is no easy task and a union of this nature has never been accomplished in the world around. It happened—The Lord caused it and the spirit of God bound us together into organic oneness.

Proposals of Union

It might be good to scan through Indian history and remember that through the initiative taken by the Danish King Frederik, the fourth, two German Protestant missionaries Ziegenbalg and Pleutschof landed in Tranquebar on the 9th of July 1706. This was the very early beginnings of the missionary movement. The 19th century has often been spoken of as 'The Great Century' (Kenneth Scott Latourette).

A few other illustrations of missionary co-operation should be mentioned. As early as 1850 missionaries from different parts of India came to conference together and met in Bengal in the year 1855. In 1857 another group from the North Western Indian Frontiers came together. The scenic Nilgiris was another Centre for a conference in 1858 at Ootacamund. 1862 was a significant year for a joint meeting in Punjab. This perhaps resulted in the first general missionary conference for the whole of India in Allahabad in 1872. In the words of Bengt Sundkler, "the differences which once had bloomed so large in England or America appeared in another light against the background of Hinduism".

In the late eighteen hundreds and the early nineteen hundreds missionary conferences began to get popular, and they needed to recognize the significant role missionaries have played in bringing together Christians in India. One such memorable conference was in Madras in the year 1900 with 150 missionaries representing forty-five missionary organizations with twenty-four Indians who came together to discuss Church union under the

able leadership of the most outstanding Indian Bishop Azariah of Dornakal. Other names to be mentioned are the Rev. Samuel Joseph in the Madurai District and the Rev. Neshack Peter of the Madras area. C. J. Lucas is another name along with J. V. Job and Santiago. These names cannot be erased in the early attempts at church union.

Perhaps we should recognize the Presbyterian Church's beginning to feel the need for union. Again to quote Bengt Sundkler 'in the history of the Presbyterian Churches, the 19th century is the period of Schisms and the 20th century the era of unions'. Of considerable importance is the formation of the United Free Church of Scotland in 1900. The spirit of coming together was beginning to emanate and seep in to the Indian soil. The infection spread even to South China when in 1899 two Presbyterian Churches united.

Dr. Jacob Chamberlain, a missionary from the Reformed Church of America who was the Moderator in 1901, called for a Synod in Vellore and made bold attempts to form a United Church at a provisional Synod. This was a significant milestone in early ecumenism. This provisional Synod comprised of a total membership of about 12,000 having about 2000 from the United Free Church and about 10,000 from the Arcot Presbytery. The following year the South Travancore group comprising of seventy-one churches with about 12,000 Christians came together. This was working towards an amalgamation of the London Missionary Society, which was English with the American Board in the Madurai District.

At this stage the first General Assembly of the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches seeking for union in India was held in July 1905. This again brought England and the United States together and did not seem to receive much objection from their respective home boards.

1908 will remain a year never to be forgotten for it was in this year that the South Indian United Church came into existence. Through this United Church the Presbyterians joined with the Congregationalists. This great event took place in Madras, in not too big a church called the Davidson Street Church, now renamed as Charles Memorial Church. The two Moderators, the Rev. Dr.

Wyckoff and the Rev. J. P. Cotelingam stood together and declared their oneness in Christ and their total pledge to the cause of unity.

As an Indian I can recognize, though not too obviously, a deeper under-current of nationalism which at this stage was a steering spirit within the political life of the country. We were coming together in a common search for our national identity and independence. Such a spirit pervading in the country, the Indian Christians were also led to search for a oneness in Christ.

The steps taken by a Wyckoff and Cotelingam was to be an initial step; for they were soon opening their arms to the Wesley Methodist Church headed by C. H. Monahan of Madras. Guildford and W. E. Tomlinson of Mysore. The idea of federation was being considered. Men like MacLean, Bishop Azariah, K. T. Paul, and H. A. Popley began to see the movement of Ecumenism not only as a coming together of denominations, but also as a movement of coming together of the nationals with the non-nationals. The nationals were beginning to be heard and the non-nationals were beginning to listen!

God's Purpose Realized

The historic inauguration of the United Church of South India was at 8.00 a.m. on the 27th of September. The bells of St. George's Cathedral chimed as it were in a new way and each chime had a message not only for us, but also for the parent bodies and for the Churches around the world. The chimes echoed the words of Tennyson 'Ring out the old and ring in the new'. It was truly the beginning of a new era in the history of the Christian Church. It was perhaps another reformation event in South India when for the first time the Episcopal and the non-Episcopal churches came together in Christian unity. There may have been similar unions between the non-Episcopal Churches and perhaps even among certain sections of the Episcopal Churches but never has there been a union between the Episcopal Churches and the non-Episcopal Churches. This perhaps brings out the significance and importance of the Church of South India today. Today we are proud inheritors of this ecumenical legacy. A daring venture in faith but one that has proved to be successful and fruitful—not by human efforts but Amazing grace!

CSI a Promised Land

We were under the shackles and fetters of denominationalism and the spirit of God who led us into unity also broke down the chain of denominationalism by which the major churches were bound. Of course there are some denominations that still refer to be bound by denominational chains. May the spirit of God continue to work. In a sense the Church of South India in modern terminology is a liberated church. Liberated not in fullness from denominational barriers but in the process of being liberated into larger union. We are happy that we have seen a foretaste of unity which our forefathers did not see and we have entered into a promised land of church union. We need to realise that denominational liberation is still a processed affair. We trust in the Lord who has led us beyond the Red Sea, beyond the bitter waters of Mara, who has fed us with manna and quails, who has made water to flow from the rocks and who has led us to this unity to continue to lead us into the fullness of the promised land.

Progress of the CSI

The 39th milestone is a significant milestone. It marks progress, promises and problems. We have grown in togetherness and we can honestly say that we are a united family. This of course, does not rule out misgivings, misunderstandings and misdoings. The general picture is a picture of progress in advancement.

We have progressed much in evangelism. Every diocese in the Church of South India (21) has listed its priorities and has listed evangelism as priority No. 1. This priority is not just numerical significance but has resulted in church growth. Again church growth not just in terms of population explosion but church growth in terms of conversions, U turns and non-Christians coming to the Christian faith. Various plans and methods have been adopted for welcoming members of other faiths into our fold and in many places the people themselves who have found the Lord have contributed much to the Christian faith and witness. Another area in which there has been growing interest in social concerns. Missionary outreach has not been limited to the Kerygma but to reaching out with Jesus Christ and His message to situations and to people. The mission of the CSI is increasingly getting to be taking Jesus into areas of human need. There are several areas in which we have progressed and perhaps Christian giving though not ideal is another area in which there has been progress. However, the Church of South India needs to give more time and direction to Christian stewardship. The move towards larger union is another feather added on to the cap of the Church of South India. There is a slow and steady movement towards larger union. The Holy Spirit who has led us thus far into union will also lead us henceforth into wider union.

Problems in the CSI

The greatest problem as I see it is the problem of the world creeping into the Church, more than the Church creeping into the world. On one side there is a constant emphasis on spiritual renewal, deeper spiritual life, etc., and on the other there is the corroding bane of power, politics and canvassing eroding the spirituality of the Church. Quite often the power for position has taken the place of emulating the powerlessness of the Cross of Jesus Christ. The aspiration for robing with the miter and the cope have replaced the Christ like model of taking the basin and washing the feet. Instead of laying aside our garments we tend to put on pomp, show and prestige rather than follow the example of Christ who stripped Himself and chose to be a servant. We canvass, politic, and worm our way into positions of responsibility. Sometimes we see in an increasing measure the desire people wanting to get into positions of power. The lay people want positions of responsibilities and work to get into committees. Pastors want temporal power and sometimes even Bishops and church workers have forgotten the Christ like role of putting off their outer clothing, wrapping a towel around their waist, pouring water into a basin and washing the disciples feet. We also have the great danger of over centralization which is sapping local initiative and depriving autonomous growth. People want power centered around themselves and this is shallow spirituality. Every church leader has to reflect within himself and herself and see if this is true in his or her ministry. If this is applicable one has to correct himself or herself. If it is not applicable we should constantly bear this danger in mind.

The model for the Church of South India should be our Lord's teaching to His disciples.

Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under His power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash His disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. 'Do you understand what I have done for you?' he asked them. You call me. "Teacher" and "Lord, and" rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet.' I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.'

The power of the world is making its way into the spiritual power of the Church. The Church of South

India following the example of the powerlessness of Jesus Christ should strive towards being the power of the people.

Another problem to be overcome in the Church of South India is the unchristian and uncharitable attitude of going to the Civil courts. Again this is becoming more and more a prestige issue and not an issue of Christians' servanthood.

Conclusion

Rather than dwelling on the negative side, I would like to be positive in concluding that God is at work in the Church of South India. We are feeble and frail and our dependance is on a strong and energising God. In our continued pilgrimage we march on towards the promised land where there will be no more denominationalism, no more division, no more power struggles. We march on with faith in God, with emptied hearts and broken lives to be healed, reconciled and made new in the healing power of God. The path is long and there will be ups and downs and we need to be more conscious of our failures rather than our successes but move forward with joyful expectancy that we are pilgrims on the march till the kingdom of God is consummated.

State of our.....(Contd. from p. 3)

to over-emphasize personal religion and 'Soul-salvation' that promoted privatization of religion to the neglect of social relationships and this worldly responsibilities. But our theological concern against privatization of religion would seem to have dampened any large-scale emergence of creative devotional literature to support and sustain personal and family worship—life of our Church members. Consequently, practically no significant material like Daily Meditation manuals have been indigenously published in our Church, not even in the four regional languages. This serious lacuna in aids and helps for nurturing 'Bhakthi' or personal and family devotional life needs to be urgently rectified. Our fear for avoiding Privatization of Religion should not make us throw away the Baby with the bath water.

Sister Carol Graham the founder of the CSI Order of Sisters who had done so much in this area had also authored several books on the meaning and practice of prayer. Our first Moderator, late Bishop Michael Hollis had left behind his greatest legacy as a man of prayer, that was so exemplary as evidenced even by the simple but inseparable posture of folded hands with which he was always seen, whether while praying or preaching or while lecturing to

a theological class. Then we have had, among others, a great contemplative Scholar, Bishop Appasamy contributing towards emergence of a genuine Indian spirituality. Recently we had the Yogan Bishop Sundereson introducing a programme of 'deeper-inner life' ministry in our congregations. But, alas, the enthusiasm for as well as expressions of such concern and commitment to such spirituality seem to have waned and faded away. Yet, I am convinced, that it is the prayer-centred spirituality of the rural illiterate Christians, particularly the prayer-life and example of lakhs of the womenfolk in our village congregations that continue to sustain and strengthen the Christian witness of our Church as a whole.

We must fervently hope and pray that the new decade we are about to begin will see all our Church members growing into a new spirituality, not only through new initiatives and expressions of public worship (Liturgia) but also simultaneously by cultivation of individual, personal and family life of devotion, not only among the urban literate elite Christians, but with deeper concern and more concerted efforts at the Diocesan level, among the rural illiterate people of God in our Church.

—Part II in next issue

Training for 21st Century Pastoral Leadership

THE MOST REVD. D. C. GORAI,* *Calcutta*

A Pastor for the 21st century has to be a man or woman with a high degree of Christian commitment, with intellectual ability and capacity to work with people, so that they could truly be agents of change, growth and development having prophetic dynamism and spiritual holiness. Such people should always be ready to launch out into the deep for more risk-taking ministry. They must be facilitators for great things to happen in the life of the Church and the wider community. Therefore, it is very necessary that the Church as a whole and its Diocese give priority concern to selection of suitable candidates and impart appropriate training with a futuristic orientation and goal. The society is fast changing and therefore our cadre workers and leaders have to have proper orientation to match this rapid change in every sphere. It is equally important that all such recruitment for paid ministry be made with utmost care and caution so as to eliminate the possibility of selecting candidates who lack proper motivation and orientation for pastoral ministry and leadership in the life of the Church.

It is high time that leaders in the Churches and their institutions make it a point to entrust responsibilities to qualified younger persons so that they may have the opportunity to gather experience in an atmosphere of Christian fellowship, with freedom to make experiments and attempt to do things with a certain amount of enterprising spirit. Church must promote enterprising spirit. Too much restrictions and over-bossing or indifference is not very conducive to the growth and development of future leaders. If this is not counteracted then the outreach work would suffer and status quo situation will be maintained, which would be counter-productive in any situation. This is not desirable.

It has been a said experience that in many of our Churches and institutions the so-called 'very efficient' have been almost dictatorial heads, and have often left the congregations and Christian institutions without trained leaders to carry on the important responsibilities effectively. It is high time that there be a thorough change in the attitude of the boards of management of our institutions and organisations. They should not be cowed down by the so-called 'strong man' or 'strong woman' as head who has succeeded in creating a 'myth' that he or she is indispensable. Probably because of the assertive presence of 'strong man' or 'strong woman' at the helm of affairs that committees and boards remain virtually ineffective without their own mind and will-power. Here, the Church must exert its authority and discipline for the sake of its mission.

Christian leaders should always be on their guard that they never block the possibility of growth of others. The promising junior leaders and workers must be entrusted

with responsibilities, and there should be a budget to train them and to equip them. We have to invest on the would-be leaders for the 21st century. There is also the need for proper planning of human resource development so that there be no dearth of suitable committed workers in any area of witness and service programmes of the Church. All these demand that we take care of the second line and third line work forces. In this context we have to develop new partnership between Churches in North, South and North-East India to achieve the above goals.

Higher Theological Education

Due to paucity of funds and urgent demands of full-time workers Churches are very often tempted to recruit 'not-so-suitable' and sometimes untrained personnel to do the job not realising that such persons would hinder growth by prohibiting initiatives and excluding more gifted and talented people from their work-force. They very often tend to develop unhealthy strategy for survival in a world of high competition and excellence. This does not mean that educated persons are not victims of such shortsightedness and bad management policy.

It is time that each diocese select a few young men or women who should be provided with opportunities to do higher education in theology and undergo other skill-oriented practical training. The CNI would very much encourage that every Diocese should have, to begin with, at least one or two Presbyters with M.Th. degrees in different fields. We do not want to stop here. We would like that in the next 10 to 15 years the CNI should be able to produce at least half a dozen theological doctorates from among the Presbyters and lay leaders of our congregations. I am glad to say that from 1987 onwards the CNI Synod would be able to support one or two prospective candidates for higher education in theology within India. The Synod will be working towards a long-term policy and provisions in this direction.

Apart from higher education in theology, the CNI Synod is also planning to facilitate different short-course training programmes in India. Negotiations with our partner Churches are in progress for setting aside some of the overseas bursary money for appropriate training of the laity and the ordained personnel within our own country. The possibility of short periods exposure overseas for a good number of field-workers is also being considered, so that ecumenical experience and insights gained by a larger number could be shared in a big way at all levels. This is indeed a mass production method to avert leadership crisis in the near future. In all these efforts and endeavours we have to guard against 'brain drainage' or

* Bishop Gorai is the Moderator of the Church of North India.

The Theology of Liberation—Some Challenge and Questions

REV. DR. K. C. ABRAHAM, *Bangalore*

The Theology of Liberation was originated in Latin America. How far is it relevant to Indian conditions? The conditions of abject poverty, mass illiteracy, high incidence of disease and malnutrition and systematic suppression of the peoples aspirations, are common features of both the Latin American nations and India. Hence the content and approach are immensely applicable to India though some of the assumptions may not. In this presentation we will outline the salient features of the Theology of Liberation.

1. It was developed as a critique of the traditional (not original) use of Christian faith and Theology. The stress is therefore on the critical dimensions of liberal theology. It was on the one hand a rejection of the kind of faith that was used as a force of manipulation by vested interests, in the traditional church hierarchy and bureaucracy so as to perpetuate their self-interest and domination over the laity or ordinary people. Thus, traditional interpretation of the scriptures was used as a tool of oppression. This interpretation was closely related to the forces of production and it determined the relationships of the oppressed to the forces of production. This interpretation was always in consonance with the oppressive designs of capitalism in Latin America.

On the other hand, Liberation Theology seeks a re-interpretation of traditional positions and attempts at a re-reading of the scriptures with the objective of liberating the people from the clutches of the traditional forces of oppression. Thus Liberation Theology is in direct conflict with the forces of tradition and the status quo and is in total opposition of the forces of oppression as personified in the institutionalized church and capitalism. Moreover, Liberation Theology attempts at a capture of the forces of production by the people themselves, and is, hence, liberative in content and form.

2. The essence of the Theology of Liberation is that it is grounded on the prophetic content of the scriptures. Thus its vision and content are focused on the centrality of a liberative Christ who believed in the unity of man and the ideals of humanity. It takes its inspiration from the prophetic utterances of Christ, such as: 'The Sabbath is made for man and not man for the Sabbath', or 'I have not come to oppose religion, but to fulfil it'. The corner stones of the Theology of Liberation are based on ideals of humanity like equality, love, solidarity, peace and brotherhood.

Thus, per se, the Theology of Liberation is opposed to injustice, inequality, oppression and all those forces which seek to degrade humanity. The Theology of Liberation is not based on an interpretation of Christianity. In fact, it is a critical understanding of Judaism and the Old Testament. The name Christianity is, by implication, a dynamic reiteration of the core of Judaism. The Theology of Liberation also seeks to destroy the petrified models of Christ that have been perpetuated by the traditional church. Instead, it seeks to understand Christ in the light of the reality of conditions as they exist today in our society. It is also based totally on the belief that Christ came as a liberator and not as a conqueror.

What is a Theology?

A status quoist understanding of the word 'theology' implied that it was a set of propositions or a code of conduct which one must accept without understanding, questioning, or interpretation. It meant an internalizing process without critical questioning, understanding or changing. It meant accepting petrified knowledge in a cloistered atmosphere and the handing down of that knowledge without attempting to understand it. Thus an atmosphere was created in the form of seminaries and cloisters were a library atmosphere prevailed and selected aspirants were grilled with outdated and unquestioned propositions that were totally at variance with the ground conditions prevailing. The products of this method were called 'theologians'.

But the followers of the Theology of Liberation questioned this very methodology. They held that propositions accepted uncritically can at best be called philosophy. They maintained that a theology implied a set of propositions that can stand the test of verification and should be open to be so interpreted as to be applicable in changing situations and conditions. They held that cloisters and seminaries where people were insulated and isolated from the masses are not required in the practice of a theology. Rather a Theology of Liberation involved an action-reflection process with and among the people and not divorced from them. It is in this process of action and reflection that people critically analyse their situation and intervene to change it. This process of intervention is called praxis.

A liberative theology can be true only in a praxis and it proves faith in relation to experience. Thus the real theologians are those who articulate and act on their faith in an effort to transform an unjust society. This

articulation can come through the medium of songs, music, art and poetry and can thus be a reinterpretation of the scriptures. The Bible itself emphasizes the necessity of knowledge. True knowledge is a search for truth, not as an abstraction, but in a lived and living experience. Thus a theology detached from the struggle and the experience of the people is an abstraction, while a theology borne out and vindicated in an existential situation is a Theology of Liberation.

What is this 'experience' in the Theology of Liberation?

Experience, as understood in the Theology of Liberation, is not an abstraction, nor can it be reduced to an individual's experience. Rather, it is a historical experience based on concrete struggles. Today, history as handed down to us, is the history of the ruling elites. It tells us nothing of the history of the people who constitute the 'underbelly' of history. The Theology of Liberation constitutes the history of the people based on concrete experience and struggle. However, this historical experience varies from one country to another. But one thing is clear, the focal point of liberation, today, is an analysis of capitalism as constituting the role of the oppressor and the unmasking and overthrow of capitalism through concrete struggle.

A close look at conditions prevailing in countries outside Latin America will show why the Theology of Liberation is equally relevant to their conditions. The blacks and Indians of America have gradually come to realise they are not just economically oppressed, but radically as well. In Africa, racism mixed with neo-colonialism has found expression in the obnoxious apartheid system. In Asia, besides economic there also exist, as evidenced in the caste system in India, forms of cultural and religious oppression. Thus a variety of historical expressions exist in these countries and the historical task before the people is to reflect and act on these situations so as to transform them. Thus, American blacks have started to question racism, Liberation Theology is gaining ground in Asia; but perhaps the most striking example of critical action is to be found in South Africa, where the blacks have engaged in armed struggle, with the support of many churches, for an end to racialism and an overthrow of the hated system of apartheid.

Tools of Analysis in the Theology of Liberation

Perhaps the most controversial aspect of the Theology of Liberation is its usage of tools of analysis, and this is where it has come into conflict with the forces of the status quo. For the tools of analysis adopted by all liberation theologians have been based on the Marxian system of analysis of society. Traditionalists announced that the Christian faith was being subverted to Marxism. But the fundamental difference was one of perception. Liberation theologians recognised that capitalism was the primary cause of oppression and perceived that the historical task of the people was its overthrow; while the fundamentalists, being allies of capitalism, called liberation theologians subversive and radicals. However, valid objections have been raised especially by Asia, regarding the tools of analysis since such analysis has failed to answer the needs of Asian conditions. This is primarily because culture and religion are so strongly embedded in the Asian consciousness that they transcend and dominate the economic determinant which is the basic fundamental of Marxism. Thus a Theology of Liberation as existing in Latin American conditions, while serving its

purpose there, fails to answer Asian conditions. Therefore, what is needed in Asia, is an evolution of its own Theology of Liberation because Asian religions as embodied in Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism are far more complex and intertwined with the lives and ethos of the people, than westernised Christianity.

The emergence of the Theology of Liberation

It is essential to remember that Liberation Theology emerged in the countries of Latin America. But why? Because of the role of the institutionalised church as oppressor and also because the whole of Latin America is overwhelmingly 'christian'. This oppression by the church was based on the presumptions of traditional theology and its interpretation of the scriptures. Traditional theologians arrogated for themselves the authority to decipher the scriptures. This led, among the Catholics, to the authority of magisterium—Rome has spoken—the issuas of dogmas, papal bulls and the like. Thus the authority of the institutionalised church was unquestioned and unquestionable. Among the Protestants it led to too literal and understanding of the Bible. So much so, that grotesque and outdated positions were adopted in practice and teaching. The church was therefore becoming more and more oppressive, irrelevant, and alienated from the people.

The Liberation Theologians discovered exactly the opposite message to the one advocated by the traditional church. This was because they deciphered the scriptures in the light of the peoples experience. They saw parallels in the Bible, of oppression and liberation, as evidenced in Moses organising the people against Pharaoh. In the middle of the struggle, God appears to Moses and thus affirms the struggle for liberation. Another marked example is the Song of Mary, in which Mary, in her gratitude at being chosen to be the mother of Jesus, speaks of the rich being punished and the poor rewarded; the just being exalted and the unjust being cast away. In Latin American conditions, the impact of this message was truly revolutionary. Earlier, the image of Mary was that of a meek and dutiful woman, ever obedient and faithful. But a reinterpretation by slum and village women led to a totally new concept of Mary, as a woman who was a fighter, not a loser. Hence, a new dimension was revealed, of women as fighters for justice, in participation with their menfolk. In a similar manner, there was a questioning of the image of nuns as meek, contemplative and indrawn, since they always modelled themselves on the traditional interpretation of Mary. Instead, the message now revealed was that nuns too must be liberative and fight for justice. Liberation Theology has thus proved to be a rediscovery of the dynamic and revolutionary message of the scriptures.

Understanding of Christ in Liberation Theology

Historically the image of Christ that existed during the Middle Ages was one of suffering, as depicted in crucifixion images and pictures or one of sentimental piety as depicted in pictures of the Nativity. These caricatures evolved as a result of the prevailing moods of the period and gradually the images became fossilized and were totally devoid of any meaning or content. Liberation Theology transformed the image of Christ. Rather than a conqueror, the Christ of the Theology of Liberation emerged as the Christ of the Poor. It was in his identification with the hopes aspirations of the people, that his divinity emerged, as Christians believe.

It is true that the Latin American situation is different from ours. Christianity is a minority religion here. The symbols and concepts which the Church uses may appear to be alien, however much it wants to put new content into them. In our multi-religious society it is therefore natural for people to brand the liberational message couched in Christian language as a covert effort to 'sell' Christianity and to add new converts to the Church. I look at the question all the time in this way. I am increasingly becoming convinced that in every religion there are two streams, one in conflict with the other. One stream can be characterised as the religion of the establishment or the institutional religion. It is often status quo oriented and invariably stifling. The original message, rituals and doctrines are cleverly twisted by the elite to suit their needs. Much of the theology as it is developed is a padding to this. But in every religion there is a minority system, the religion of the people which strives hard to break out of the domination of the elite. It is this stream which is liberational. It is seldom conceptualised and intellectually articulated. It is a living tradition influencing the ordinary people through its symbols, folk stories and myths. In their own way they protest the dominance of the elite, they dream dreams of a new order and relation. One may include the emergence of Buddhism and the Bhakti movement in this tradition. I also believe that the people's stream in all the religions have a common language. Together they struggle for their humanity. My hope is that the liberational stream in all religions will come together. Christian priests and nuns in the fishermen's struggle in Kerala and Hindu Swamis working among the bonded labourers in Madhya Pradesh have one language and one concern—liberation of the oppressed. What prevents them from coming together? There is an enormous potential here. This solidarity alone is the best form to counter the obscurantist communalism, a game played by the elite and the state and the religion of the establishment.

Some Questions

Questions are raised with regard to the total dependence on Marxism as a tool of analysis of the Asian situation. While Marxist analysis has focused its attention on the economic structures of injustice in Asia our people are also under the clutches of cultural and social forces of oppression. This legitimate criticism will have to be taken seriously. An authentic version of liberation theology will have to address itself to all forms of oppression. Perhaps we need to evolve a more adequate framework to analyse the Asian reality.

Liberation Theology has also not addressed itself to the concerns of man's relation to the environment, since its focus is on the production process of history. Crucial questions relating to feminism, human relationships in the cultural and familial fields, questions of ecology, pollution and others are difficult to be raised within this framework.

However, in spite of these limitations, Liberation Theology has helped in harmonising religion and has thus afforded the truly oppressed an opportunity to critically reflect on their reality and act on it so as to produce change, as evidenced in many parts of Latin America.

REV. K. C. ABRAHAM

'talent drainage', specially from the rural areas. The rural leaders need special attention in all our leadership training programmes.

We also believe that some academically brilliant Pastors and lay leaders should be provided with opportunities for higher education in overseas universities so that on their return they meet our institutional needs and inspire and challenge our young generation with a new ambition and dream. One of the tragedies in North India has been that there have not been many local heroes in the Church engaged in mission. Our boys and girls need local models in mission. The Church of North India is scattered over 2/3 of Indian territory, hence the ministry of Jesus Christ in this area has to be strengthened with new inputs. During the last 25 years there has not been much planned effort to produce our own resource persons. The Church in order to be resourceful, needs resource persons at all levels. You cannot survive on borrowed, hired or migratory personnel. There has to be maximum self-reliance with regard to expertise and skilled personnel. They must belong to the area of operation as far as possible.

It is time to correct the imbalances that have been created between the North and South, East and West in this great country in India. Ecumenical agencies must change their policies to overcome the imbalance. Change is the very essence of distributive justice. This has to be practiced in letters and spirit. 'Second Class' North Indian Christian leadership is a great loss for the whole Church in India, and hence there has to be an awakening in the Churches in India and more particularly in North India.

It is high time that the leaders in North India begin to plan for the future. I hope very much that the leaders in the Church of North India will work fast to avoid a serious leadership crisis situation in the next 10 to 15 years time. This situation needs emergency curative treatment as well as long-term preventive measures so that erosion and collapse may be avoided. I hope very much that all our leaders and members of the Church would think very seriously of how we should move into the 21st century. 'Leadership is not optional.' It is the ingredient essential for the success of any organization. Take away leadership and confusion replaces vision.'

Now, more than ever before, people should act together. Individual dreams which inspired men and women in the past are over. 'Communal Vision' explored by communities are the means by which humankind will advance into the 21st century. Individual dreams and visions very often become a liability for the community. Hence at every stage the community has to be taken into full confidence in our method of operation and strategy for mission.

Mission must address to the needs, capacity and culture of those involved. Every one must be equipped to carry on mission in his or her own place. So, training is very important and its scope must be broadened. We no longer live in an age of giants. Today is the time of the pygmies. Even the 'smallest' member of the community is vital to the future development and progress of the community, and is in fact a potential giant'.

CHRISTIAN is an ADJECTIVE

Excerpts from REV. DR. CHRISTOPHER DORAISINGH

“‘Christian’ describes what the church should do,” said Christopher Doraisingh. ‘It is an adjective to illustrate our doing with Christ.’ This was one of the many challenging statements given by Christopher in his second theme address entitled ‘Doing with Christ—pattern for our mission’.

Christopher introduced his address by referring to his remarks on Monday on principalities and powers in the first century and how today we still don’t seem to be getting anywhere in coping with the structures of evil. ‘We are still slaves to those demonic powers today,’ said Christopher. Paul’s response to this situation was to look upon Jesus as the second Adam, or ‘our elder brother, and this according to Christopher became our pattern for mission, which is a valid pattern for today. As one is confirmed in the image of Christ, the pattern for our mission becomes possible. In fact we see what is possible through Acts 4:13 where the Jewish hierarchy recognised the apostles as ordinary men of no education, but acknowledged that they had simply been with Jesus. Christopher showed how there were two significant words repeated again and again in the Gospels—‘seeing’ and ‘moved’, which appeared to be almost inseparable. ‘To be seeing with Christ is to be moved with Christ,’ declared Christopher. This implies the acceptance of Christ’s compassion, the root word of which in the Bible suggests the pain of uterine cramp. ‘Seeing with Christ,’ said Christopher ‘prevents us from sitting comfortably in an armchair.’ ‘Can you sit calmly after reading about the killing and detention of children in South Africa?’ he asked.

We were then reminded of Jesus’ first public act of being baptised in the Jordan according to Christopher

this was a symbolic act of getting immersed in the agonies of God’s people. He asked us where was the Jordan river which flows through our streets today carrying the agonies and problems of our people? Time in the wilderness followed the baptism event making them into a single experience. It was in the wilderness that the glorious plans of Jesus were revealed. In such a setting, Christopher felt that God was inviting us to get lost—totally immersed in his purposes. And there was a great sense of urgency in all this. ‘Churches around the world lack a sense of urgency,’ declared Christopher. Another reaction to the doings of Jesus was shown by his family who saw him as being eccentric. He felt that we also should be the same, by in the context of being ex-centric—our centre being on the outside. ‘A church turned outside itself is doing with Christ,’ said Christopher. We were reminded of the great ecumenical challenge that the world is writing the agenda of the church, and with this the word Christian becomes an adjective. Christopher referred to a Martin Luther King sermon on the parable of the good samaritan which shows the two extremes—the priest and the levite asking what would happen to them if they did something, samaritan asking what would happen if nothing was done. Christopher felt this showed the samaritan as being ex-centric.

Christopher’s concluding words again referred to the Kingdom of God as in his previous address. This time he showed that the Kingdom was about the politics of shalom which emphasised wholeness at all costs. ‘The traditions of the church are made subordinate in achieving wholeness’ was Christopher’s passing shot at us, as now in eager anticipation the Conference awaits his final theme on the costliness of mission.

—from the Swanwick DAILY DOINGS edited by Eileen Thomson.

Rev. Doss Babu was one of the participants of the Swanwick (England Conference).



Amsterdam 86

More than 8,000 evangelists from 173 countries and territories devoted 10 days at Amsterdam's cavernous RAI Convention Center to sharpening their skills and increasing their knowledge to better 'do the work of the evangelist'—the conference's theme.

Welcomed to Amsterdam 86 by honorary chairman Billy Graham, participants heard 21 plenary addresses, attended five conference-wide seminars and selected seven of 141 workshops offering ideas for nearly every imaginable aspect of evangelism, from fundraising to open air preaching to working with teenagers in the Middle East.

The spirit of revival was dramatically symbolized in opening ceremonies as six torchbearers representing the earth's continents simultaneously lighted the 'flame of the gospel'.

It was reverently present in a massive communion service as preachers from various nations, cultures and church traditions joined in prayerful remembrance of Christ's death on the cross.

Amsterdam 86, an expanded version of a similar meeting held in the same city in 1983, fulfilled a dream for Graham. The 67-year-old American evangelist, who envisioned a 'school for evangelists' in contrast to a conference on evangelism, was the guiding force behind the historic meeting.

Sponsored by his Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, the \$21-million conference marked what United Nations officials agreed was the most widely representative international meeting in history.

While the United States sent the largest number of any single country (1,288), three-fourths of the participants came from Third World nations. More than 2,300 came from 49 countries in Africa, 520 came from India.

Participants later put that exhortation into action. In a 'Day of Witness,' the corps of preachers invaded the streets and beaches of Holland armed with witnessing materials. Transported by 120 buses to 68 locations, evangelists had the chance to put into practice some of the things they had learned at the conference. Results were mixed, but experience injected another dose of enthusiasm into the meeting.

Transportation

When 222 preachers from Argentina and Uruguay were stranded for five days in Buenos Aires because of a pilot's strike, ICIE officials called around the world and eventually located a DC-8 which brought the group to Amsterdam midway through the meeting. The gesture was costly—about \$244,000—but news of the South Americans' arrival provided another rallying point for participants.

Language

Conference proceedings were translated simultaneously into as many as 16 primary languages and nine secondary languages. Non-English speaking evangelists tuned in via battery-powered headsets as a team of 112 interpreters worked tirelessly to keep communication flowing.

Food

Hot meals were served in 90 minutes each evening to staff, 'stewards' and participants in two huge dining rooms. The near-miraculous feat by KLM airline's catering service was quickly dubbed 'the feeding of the 10,000'.

Media Coverage

Five of the largest Christian radio networks cooperated to produce daily programs about the conference which were transmitted in 22 languages for audiences around the world. Journalists from 44 countries reported on the meeting in 15 languages for secular and religious publications. Amsterdam 86 was even used as a backdrop for the story line of a new motion picture, *Caught*, being produced by World Wide Pictures.

Throughout the conference, participants were called to fulfill their distinctive role as evangelists. Graham, in one of his four plenary addresses, reminded them that evangelists represent 'one of God's gifts to the church'. For that reason, he said, they should find 'great confidence' in their calling.

A battery of other plenary speakers also exhorted evangelists to stake their lives on the authority of the Bible, to saturate their preaching in prayer and Bible study, and to tie their ministries to the work of the local church.

Bishop Thangamuthu and Bishop Jason Dharmaraj were among the 520 participants who went from India. Editor of this monthly was specially invited to be one of the desk editors.

Graham also stressed that 'million of people are open today' to the Christian message. That openness, he said, has been created by 'a gigantic spiritual vacuum' that only Christ can fill.

Sensing the spirit of thousands of his colleagues, Graham said his prayer is that the International Conference for Itinerant Evangelists will spark 'a fire of revival' that will spread around the globe.

In a dramatic portrayal of his appeal, the conference concluded as the six torchbearers rekindled their torches and carried them from the meeting as 'messengers of the Light' to the world.

—D.B.

Commission for SC ST BC Catholic Bishops' Conference of India

JUSTICE SUNDAY

A MESSAGE TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH

Introduction

Conscious of the sad plight of the Christians of Scheduled Caste Origin (CSCO) Scheduled Tribes and Backward Communities, the Church in India declares the Sunday after Independence day (*this year 17th August*) as Justice Sunday. It is primarily to express our sincere concern for and solidarity with the CSCO and Tribes and also with all those who are the victims of oppression, injustice and exploitation. This celebration consists of a special liturgical celebration/Bible service and public meetings at various levels.

Through the celebration of the Justice Sunday, the Church in India wants all of us to pray unitedly that the Lord may help us to purify ourselves from the evils of casteism that has disfigured her image as the people of God. This requires a constant process of conscientization among all the sections of the people of God. This purification from within the Church should enable and encourage us to work through peaceful and non-violent means for the removal of the glaring discrimination shown to the Christians of Scheduled Caste Origin.

Any effort of ours in this line must be strengthened by prayer and penance. For, what is impossible for us is possible for God. We have the example of the first Christians who prayed in times of crisis. In our own times we have witnessed the power of prayer in different ways.

Hence the day of Justice Sunday should be a day of fervent prayer and penance followed by sincere and united human efforts.

Caste System and Untouchability

The caste system, still a matter of study by the historians and sociologists, and the entire ideological-cultural and psychological superstructures built on it is extraordinarily tough and deep rooted. It is a peculiarity arising from the specifics of India's historical development and is found nowhere else in the world. It has become part and parcel of Indian society, determining the very life of the individual. It was perhaps the most rigid form of social stratification. Its most inhuman feature was to classify some as outcastes or untouchables. This practice of untouchability reduced millions of people in our country to the status of being untouchables and unapproachables, in the eyes of others. Their very sight and shadow were and are still regarded by many as polluting. Although the Constitution of India has abolished untouchability and made its practice as an offence punishable under law, it continues unabated in rural India where eighty per cent of our people live. Deep rooted social evils die hard !!!

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

At the time of Independence more than fifteen per cent of the people of India were enumerated as the depressed or commonly called the untouchables or the outcastes and five per cent known as the tribals. These two categories of people have been the most backward in the socio-economic and educational fields. The majority of them are illiterate, landless farm labourers. A few did all kind of works which the high castes considered as degrading and mean. After independence, it was strongly felt that these people required special protection and privileges and concessions for their social and economical upliftment. In order to classify them as special groups, the President of India prepared a list of those castes : races or tribes or part of our groups within castes, races or tribes which for the purpose of the constitution were deemed to be the SC. It was further stipulated that profession of Hindu religion on the part of person was a condition to be recognized as member of SC. Both the Central Government and State have reservations, privileges and concessions extended to the SCs and STs.

The Sikhs protested against what they regarded as blatant discrimination against SC converts to Sikhism. Consequently in 1956 the Parliament amended clause three of the Presidential Order of 1950 and included the SCs converts to Sikhism in the list. By this order those who profess religions other than Hinduism and Sikhism are denied of Central Government special privileges granted to SC people such as reserved constituencies for parliament seats, reserved seats for employment, scholarships for education, special rights for allotment of agricultural land and housing sites etc.

Prior to formulation of the Constitutions, the Christians enjoyed some reservations. This was voluntarily surrendered at the time of the framing of the Constitution. When the Constitution Scheduled Castes Order 1950 was introduced the Christians were assured by the President and the Prime Minister that this Order would not take away those aids concessions etc. and that it was meant only for the reservation of parliamentary and legislative seats for the SCs. This promise has gone void. The Christians lost their reservation and now lost their aids and concessions.

Church's Stance on Caste

Caste is a man-made evil. It is alien to the spirit of Christianity which professes equality of men. The Church stands for the abolition of caste. The resolution of the All India Seminar and the periodical statements of CBCI have consistently deplored the evils of Caste. The statement on Caste by CBCI in its meeting at Trichy

categorically declares 'caste with its consequent effects of discrimination and caste mentality has no place in Christianity. It is, in fact, a denial of Christianity because it is inhuman. It violates the God-given dignity and equality of the human person. God created man in his own image and likeness. He accepts and loves every human being without distinction.' The statement goes on to say that *caste mentality* is an outright denial of the Fatherhood of God which in practice renders meaningless the brotherhood of man. Cardinal Pichachy then President of the CBCI highlighted the problem in the following words: 'This problem is one of the urgent ones to be tackled if the scale of justice is to be balanced in our society.'

Special Assistance to Continue

It is the long-term objective of the Church to create a casteless society in which there will be equality of opportunity and in which special treatment will be based only on social and economic backwardness. However, she demands that as long as special treatment is accorded to SC, the same should be extended to CSCO.

The evils of centuries of oppression and exploitation cannot be remedied in the span of a few years. The term 'Scheduled Caste' is a creation of law to enable the untouchable members to better their standards of life and acquire human dignity and equality and not a creation of the society. In the strict sense it is not a caste at all. Therefore in the present context, the word SC means socio-education; economic backwardness. The special treatment should continue until SCs and STs will be able to enter the main stream of Indian life and compete with their fellow brethren on equal footing.

Discrimination Against the CSCO

The Presidential Order of 1950 is a clear discrimination against the CSCO in the basis of religion. While Article 15 of the Constitution prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, and Article 25 guarantees the right to freedom of conscience and freedom to profess and practice religion, the Presidential order goes against the very constitution of India. One fails to understand the logic of the policy of the Central Government and certain State Governments in withdrawing reservations and benefits, to those of the SC origin who leave Hindu or Sikh religion and embrace other religions like Christianity etc. and again extending the same when they revert back to Hinduism and Sikhism.

Twofold Programme

(1) Within the Church :

As stated at the beginning of this message the first aim of the celebration of the Justice Sunday is to conscientize the Church in India from within and purify her from every type of caste mentality. This is the best example and incentive that the Church can give to others.

Caste should not be the determining factor in membership of pastoral or parish councils and other Church associations; and much less ecclesiastical appointments and posts of responsibility in religious congregations.

The concrete suggestions of the CBCI meeting at Trichy should be fully carried out. Some of these are as follows :

Special provision on a priority and guaranteed basis, should be made for them in the matter of admissions to educational institutions, where particular attention should be paid to them through remedial and coaching classes if necessary. Caritas India, which has already opted in favour of projects to assist the backward classes, is urged to step up its programme in this line as to remedy the helplessness resulting from economic, social and other causes. In all cases, our efforts must be directed towards the removing the sense of inferiority under which they have been labouring for centuries and towards strengthening their feeling of being free citizens of India. In particular we call upon Bishops and religious Superiors to provide positive encouragement towards the promotion of vocations from the depressed classes to the priesthood and religious life.

A change of mental attitude is the most essential thing. Planned celebration of Justice Sunday through prayer and penance, reflection on the Word of God will surely open a new chapter in the life of the Church in India.

(2) Sustained effort :

(a) During the past 36 years many Christian pioneers from among the Bishops, clergy and laity of all denominations have been making strenuous efforts individually and through their respective associations for the removal of the discrimination imposed by the Presidential Order on a large section of citizens. These efforts have been only marginally useful but the basic problem of discrimination and injustice still remains unsolved, affecting the lives of more than sixty percentage of the Christian population in India. Even the judgement delivered by the Supreme Court on two cases challenging the Presidential Order 1950 came as a great surprise and disappointment.

(b) Fresh representations should be made to the President, the Prime Minister, the Governors and CMs requesting them to remove the glaring discrimination and include the CSCO in the list of SCs.

(c) Co-operation and support of all like minded people should be sought for this sustained campaign.

Christianity does not believe in violence but in love. Hence all efforts must be made out in a peaceful and non-violent manner as taught by Jesus Christ and followed by Mahatma Gandhi the Father of our Nation.

Conclusion

God created man for happiness. Divisions are casteism and all kinds of exploitation and injustice are man-made. They are the result of his sin and selfishness. Jesus Christ, the embodiment of love and concern for others, inaugurated a kingdom of peace, justice and brotherhood. These are the general aspirations of individuals and nations. These are the ideals enshrined in the constitution of India. Through the celebration of Justice Sunday, every Christian is called upon to build a strong secular and democratic India where all will have equal opportunities without distinction of caste or creed to live and work as brothers and sisters.

CBCI COMMISSION FOR SC/ST/BG
4th July 1986

NEWS FROM THE DIOCESES

KANYAKUMARI DIOCESE YOUTH CONFERENCE AND FESTIVAL

The Work Among the Young Committee of our Diocese conducted the Youth Conference and Celebrated the Youth Festival on 15th August, 1986 at the Women's Christian College, Nagercoil. The Synod Youth Board's theme for the year 1986 'Peace with Justice' was adopted as our theme. Bishop G. Christdhas (Bishop in Kanyakumari Diocese) chaired the conference and Bishop K. Michael John (Bishop in East Kerala Diocese) delivered two informative talks and challenged the Youth to become makers of Peace. The conference opened with the spirit moving Indian form of worship led by Rev. D. Justin Devadhason. He composed and taught special songs based on the theme which was enthusiastically sung by the 250 participants of both the sexes, who participated in the conference. The outcome of the group discussions shows the quest of the Youth to have a society based on Peace with Justice.

The Youth Conference climaxed with the youth festival marked by the cultural evening. Young artists presented the Conference theme through songs, dramas and Bharatha Natyam. Rev. P. J. Jeyaseelan and the W.A.Y. Committee was responsible for the arrangements of the Conference and festival. The participants felt the gentle moving of the spirit of the Lord throughout the programme.

REV. G. DEVAKADASHAM,
Youth Worker.

TIRUNELVELI DIOCESE

The outreach programme which is a ten year old venture is now being carried out all over Tamil Nadu covering all the CSI Dioceses. With the co-operation of the dioceses, the annual outreach camps are being held usually in the first week of May. Most of the participants who are drawn from the clergy and the laity voluntarily attend these camps.

Last year the 9th Outreach Programme had helped in sending a missionary couple who are stationed at Menasi in Dharmapuri District. The participants came forward to contribute to this noble cause.

This year we entered another state, i.e. Andhra Pradesh, with an idea to help Tamil congregations.

There were about 175 participants. Rt. Rev. Jason S. Dharmaraj, Bishop in Tirunelveli was the guiding spirit behind the programme. Nagari was chosen the venue of our Outreach Programme.

The participants were divided into six groups and they worked from 6-00 a.m. to 9-00 p.m. with lunch break and rest for about an hour. Areas were allotted for each group and the groups covered almost all interior villages and proclaimed the Gospel. The group leaders used to present their reports every day.

As a reward for our work in the area for a week, some 20 families came forward to accept Christ.

The Nagari local Church extended its full co-operation and helped in making our programme a success. This time the lay participation was highly encouraging.

REV. G. STEPHEN LIONEL,
Palayamkottai.



NEWS from All Over

INTER-FAITH DIALOGUE ON COMMUNAL HARMONY AND PEACE

DR. G. R. SINGH, *Secretary, N.C.C.I., Nagpur,*

Twenty-five participants belonging to different religious communities—Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Christian (Roman Catholics, Orthodox and Protestant) met in New Delhi on 21-23 July, 1986 in a spirit of mutual acceptance and recognition to reflect together on the urgent issues related to communal harmony, peace and justice in the present-day context of India. The group sponsored by the National Council of Churches in India met at the Church of North India Bhavan and at the Guru Nanak Foundation. The group expressed deep concern at the decline of human values and moral leadership in our society despite the growth of religious revivalism. The escalation of communal hatred and violence was discussed in depth and it was argued that the basic causes of the present disharmony are more socio-economic and political than religious. The 'divide and rule' policy of the British colonial Raj is still being perpetuated today by politicians and the business class to further their vested interests and power structures. The group urged that the human values of India as a secular state with impartiality to all religions must be sustained and promoted among all levels of society. Members of the group emphasised that conversions must be distinguished from all forms of dishonest and forceful inducements to proselytisation. Papers on various aspects of communal problem were read by Dr. Mohinder Singh, Director, Guru Nanak Foundation—a research and study centre; Dr. Mrs. Anima Bose, a Gandhian scholar; Dr. Walter Fernandez, Director, Indian Social Institute; Dr. Asghar Ali, Engineer, Director, Institute of Islamic Studies, Bombay; Mr. Sydney Rebeiro, a teacher from Delhi University and Dr. G. R. Singh, Secretary N.C.C.I. All of them emphasised that religious and communal harmony and peace must be the concern not only of the educated leadership of the religious communities but of the ordinary people also at the grass root level and that such dialogues must be held in the villages and semi-urban areas as well as in cities. The participants made the following recommendations:—

- Encourage the formation of open forums, peace centres and councils at local, regional and national levels for discussion and dialogue on the issue of

peace, justice and harmony in our society by members of religious communities and institutions. At all such open forums, adequate representation of women and youth should be ensured.

- We condemn all forms of violence, overt and subtle to achieve any ends. We urge for exploring of ways and means to curb violence through meetings, discussions, dialogue and articulation of this concern through media. We urge all religious communities to explore non-violent means to achieve social harmony and justice.
- We request all religious communities to restrain from all external expression of ostentation, exhibitionism including elaborate processions and provocative slogan—shouting in sensitive areas which may accentuate communal hatred and violence.
- We urge that greater care be taken by all communities and particularly by the vernacular, regional and national media in the use of religious and communal terminology in order to avoid misinterpretation and misinformation which may increase communal disharmony.

While appreciating the new direction in educational policy for fostering objectivity, we emphasise impartial and unbiased teaching and knowledge of the different religions of India be incorporated in the educational curricula especially at the school and university levels with preparation of adequate textbooks and training of teachers. All existing distortions and anomalies be removed. The state controlled media should be totally free from any unwarranted and undue political interference in matters of covering communal and other such events.

- We urge to ensure that the minorities commissions at the Centre and at the State levels, and other integration councils or panels have statutory status and adequate and true representation of the minorities communities.

HONG KONG—about three thousand churches in China with three to four million members, are waiting for formal registration from the office of the Religious Affairs Bureau, according to a report from a church elder from mainland China. The elder, who has travelled through most of China's provinces, brought his report to the Chinese Church Research Centre.

In addition to the churches awaiting registration, he said, there are already 4,000 registered churches open and operating throughout mainland China. His estimate of

the number of registered churches confirms the report of the China Christian Council, the official government-approved body.

In addition to the 4,000 registered churches and the 3,000 unregistered churches, he estimated that there are between 25 to 30 million Christians involved in unregistered meeting points or 'house churches'. Some of those unregistered house churches work in close co-operation with registered churches, but many others pursue a deliberate policy of not seeking registration.

DR. EMMANUEL E. JAMES HONOURED

'Bible Hermeneutics : Principles and Methods' (*Bible Bhashyashastra : Siddhant aur Paddhati*) is the name of a book written by Dr. Emmanuel E. James of Southern Asia Bible College, Bangalore. It was published in 1984 by Hindi Theological Literature Committee. The Ministry of Human Resources Development of the Government of India has declared a national award for this book. Dr. James has been invited to receive the Prize personally at a function to be held in New Delhi on August 22 and 23, 1986. Dr. James is the only Christian and a Kannadiga among the 15 recipients of the award from all

over India this year. There have been good reviews of this book by the Protestant as well as Roman Catholic Scholars. This book is used as Textbook to teach Bible Hermeneutics in Hindi medium Seminaries and Theological Colleges of North India run by Protestant and Roman Catholic churches. Copies of this book can be purchased from the Lucknow Publishing House, 37, Cantonment Road, Lucknow, U.P. His other published books in Hindi are Pastoral Psychology and a Textbook for Women's Schools in Theological Colleges.

Our Recent Publications

CHRISTIANITY IN INDIA—UNIQUE AND UNIVERSAL MISSION by Solomon Doraisawmy; pp. 284 ; Rs. 25.00

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Solomon Doraisawmy was moved to write this book, to present the true position of the Christian enterprise in India, because of the misrepresentation made in a recent publication under the auspices of the Ramakrishna Mission entitled *Christianity in India : A Critical Study*. He does not intend this as an *Apologia*, but he desires to present the truth regarding the Christian faith and its mission in and to the world, in a spirit of love—the spirit of Christ. After spending a good deal of time in India and abroad researching, doctrinal and sociological, he sets out the true reason for the mission aspect of the Christian church. He also stresses the reasons underlying the chosen fields of service taken up by Christians. So, on the one hand he deals with Man's need for the Grace of God through the forgiveness of sin freely offered to all mankind through the death and resurrection of Jesus, who died that all men may be reconciled to God through a recognition of their sins and their need for His forgiveness. Such a recognition empowers men to turn away from sin, and live as the children of God through a way of life governed by the all embracing principle of love. On the other he endeavours to bring out the need and hunger for this Gospel—this good news—because of the political, social and economic exploitation of a whole mass of people in India, who are now denied basic human rights. If Christianity has made any progress in the land of many faiths and of varied religious experiences, it is because it did meet in some measure, spiritual hunger on the one hand; and liberty, happiness and social dignity on the other, for all those who embraced Christianity in spite of persecution, ostracism and abuse. This book is a full and able rejoinder to the point at which Christianity has been unfairly criticised.

INCARNATION AND NEW CREATION by Dr. A. J. van der Bent, pp. 180 ; Rs. 14.00

What is most exciting about this new book from Dr. van der Bent, Librarian of the World Council of Churches, is the lofty point of view from which he surveys the task of the Christian in the world of today. Having had a variety of experiences, and being now in an excellent position to look at the work of the Churches all over the globe, Dr. van der Bent proceeds to outline the challenge before us as a world religion. It is a deeply meditated call to unity, to service, participation, even in and through the complexity of local and national situation. Well written, well documented and deeply understanding the book is indeed something that cannot be set aside. It is a must for every Christian, every church and every nation.

For all your requirements in books, please write to :

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REV. K. I. AIER

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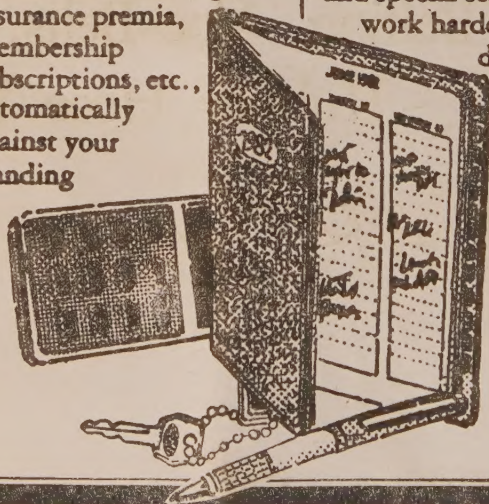
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